

**[Mr. W. S. McLure]**

No. 2 73

SOUTH CAROLINA WRITERS' PROJECT

Life History

TITLE: How Mr. W. S. McLURE CAME TO BE IN THE REAL ESTATE BUSINESS.

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Name of Person Interviewed Mr. W.S. McLure

Street Address West Main Street

Place Union, S. C.

Occupation Real Estate Man

Name of Writer Caldwell Sims

Name of Reviser Union, S. C.

Mr. J. W. McLure, my father came to Unionville from Chester, S.C., when he was only 18 years old. His uncle, John McLure ran a mercantile business on Main street at the site now occupied by Wright-Baker. He took father in with him and this was father's first business enterprise.

When I was a small by there were only [?] four buildings on Main Street, that are still standing now. They are the Hob Nob Restaurant, Wright-Baker's and the Flynn home, and

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further down the street the building which now houses the Arthur Stores. C. 10. S. C. Box, 2.

2

As a youth, I felt within me a desire to be something and had an idea of owning a home and real estate, some future day. I wanted to be with people would call a good citizen, a builder and one whom my associates would look on with admiration.

To-day Mr. McLure lives in a beautiful home on South Street, which he owns. It has an attractive yard and the house is well kept and commodious in its appointments. He has an easy smooth running car. His other property which is dotted all over Union is also well kept and his rental houses are attractive to the eye of the beholder. In his developing and buying of land in the city limits he has always had a tendency to improve and beautify the landscape and to also see that his renters keep up the premises.

Mr. McLure has developed North Church Street by building a group of four room houses over there. The lawns are planted and kept attractively all the year round. He always protects the trees that nature has implanted on his property all over the town, often adding shrubs or more trees where shade and beauty are needed. He has his houses well lighted and adequate plumbing installed.

On historic "Tosch" Branch is a well kept valley, known as McLure bottoms. The flora and fauna on the branch through the McLure property has been protected and remains undisturbed. This is a spot of beauty the entire year round and here the branch is traversed by fashionable South Street. The bottoms are planted in a forage crop mixed with vetch and lespediza, thus furnishing a picture of beauty and prosperity to the eye throughout all seasons.

3

My first work was with my father, Mr. J. W. McLure, in his general merchandise store known as the firm of "Rice and McLure". It was an old frame building which stood on Main

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street at the site of our present marble yard. I began to work here when I stopped school and I was between 14 and 15 years old. Father paid me \$100.00 a year and I saved some money from this salary. Of course I lived at home with him and I had no room and board to pay. I had ambition to save some and I have had a desire to have something ever since. I enjoyed this work and received valuable business training under Father.

I desired more education. So the next year Father sent me to Charleston to the Holy Communion Church Institute, now Porter Military Academy. I studied here during 1882 and 1883. Some of my classmates have become distinguished. They are General Charles P. Summerall, of the Citadel, Charleston; Philip H. Gadsden of Philadelphia and others who well known in this country to-day. At the end of the year I left Charleston and returned to Union, again working for Rice and McLure. I stayed with the firm until they went out of business in 1889.

Father then went into business as J. W. McLure, Agent, for W.H. Roseborough of Chester, S.C. He ran a general mercantile business where the Rialto Theater now is. He remained here until 1891. Here I made \$50.00 a month, which is the most that I ever made as a salesman. By this time I had a wife and two children. All of my earnings went for the upkeep of my family. My wife became ill and lived only three years. I had heavy doctors' bills and other expenses, which I did not get cleared up for several years afterwards.

My brother J. Fred McLure studied law in Chester, under his cousin, Joe McLure, and was admitted to the bar in Columbia.

4

When he returned from Chester he and I bough Father's business and we ran it together until 1920. When my brother and I went into business; I began making my first dabbles in real estate. I also sold coal; bought cotton seed; sold cotton seed meal and hulls, on the side. And brother did some law practice on the side. During this time we bought and paid

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for the building in which we were doing business. We also built another building, which is now known as the "Hob Nob Restaurant". After we built the store back of the "Hob Nob."

1914 found me entering into the real estate business, as a main objective, by the organization of "The McLure Realty Company, a corporation, of which I am now the president and treasurer. Since 1914 I have dealt regularly in real estate. But when brother and I entered business together. I took my meagre savings and bought our small stock of goods, from the creditors of J.W. McLure, our father. We brothers made some money cash year and increased our stock of goods some at the beginning of the new year. My brother paid me back what he owed me in the beginning and we were on a fifty-fifty proposition. Then we made money on our side lines, that I have mentioned.

1920 found our firm a failure; so we went into bankruptcy. Brother Fred re-opened under a corporation known as J. F. McLure. When we were together we were known as J.F. and W.S. McLure. Now Fred had complete ownership of the store. I went actively into the real estate business, and opened up my office captioned "the McLure Reality Company."

Since then I have gone in an even tenure of my ways, slowly building houses, principally on a cash basis, with very little credit at any time. I have found in my experience that the four room house is the most practical house to rent in Union. I own a good many in a nice section of town that I rent by the month.

During the period that my brother and I were in the mercantile business and I in the Realty business. I was a Director in the Citizens Bank from the time of it's organization. For 18 years I was a member of the commission of the Light and Water Plant of Union. During this period the building and the settling basin on Highway #176 was built and also the storage plant located on N. Church Street, just across from the standpipe.

Now the "right Baker building which I mentioned was partly burned in the fire of 1872, but it was built over. And when I came to Union as a boy of six the Union Times Office and the Tinsley Jewelry Store were the only two firms that have been in continuous operation in

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Union. They are the two oldest firms here and have been in continuous operation since their organization. The Tinsley Jewelry Store has never changed its name or gone out of the family.